

THREE SEASONS AYURVEDA



Understanding Your Constitution

The question “what is my constitution?” or, alternatively, “what is my dosha?” is the first thing patients ask their Ayurvedic practitioner. According to Ayurveda, one’s constitution is his/her unique balance of the three doshas – the biological forces that govern the body –, which are inherent in each of us and established at conception.

The three basic constitutional types are Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Each person has some of each but one predominates. For each type, a specific diet is applicable, as well as appropriate uses of aroma, color, sound, yoga and massage therapies.



Vata *“The Energy of Movement”*

The Vata nature has the qualities of cold, dry, light and mobile. Individuals with this dominate dosha become cold easily, have lower body weight and longer, narrower bones. They experience more dryness of the skin, eyes and colon, which can result in a tendency towards constipation and gas. With a predominance of air and mobility their natures are creative, artistic and spiritual. They tend toward fast speech, quick movements and nervousness. When out of balance they can seem scattered, overwhelmed, have difficulty sleeping and can change their minds easily and often. The challenge for Vata is stay focused and grounded.

Pitta *“The Energy of Digestion & Transformation”*

The pitta dosha has the qualities of hot, weight, light and mobile. With their natural internal heat, they often experience softer, looser stools or diarrhea. Pitta types usually have moderate body builds with good muscular development. Their skin is often oily, possibly with freckles, and they are prone to rashes, acne and pimples. This dosha is forthright, which can strike others as brutally honest and sharp in communicating. While this directness can irritate, they will get the job done. Known for their passion and intensity, they can sometimes be impatient. They make up their minds quickly but are willing to reconsider a decision given more information and thought.

Kapha *“The Energy of Lubrication”*

The nature of Kapha is cool, wet, moist and stable. Individuals with this heavy nature, tend to have thicker bones, a stocky, denser build and perhaps shorter, thicker necks and fingers. However, they are not necessarily overweight. One of Kapha's defining qualities is a slower and easy going pace; they do not get upset easily, have a gentle disposition and unconditionally loving personalities. Their challenges include difficulty with motivation, a lack of spontaneity and they sometimes procrastinate and behave stubbornly. Once they make up their minds, they stick with the decision.

Knowing your constitution, which is also called “Prakruti” or nature, can help explain qualities one has already identified but doesn’t always understand. This can be useful in observing one’s natural attractions and how they may contribute to imbalance and, ultimately, disease in the body. Taking into consideration the physical attributes associated with one’s dosha can determine the best course for one’s long-term mental, emotional, behavioral and spiritual well being.

Although it is best to consult with a trained Ayurvedic practitioner in determining one’s constitution, the attached ***Dosha Test*** will give you a sense of your basic nature or combination of doshas. With this information, you can begin to create an environment that will support your unique needs.

Ayurveda uses the five sense therapies – vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch – to bring balance and restore health to the body. The first consideration in Ayurveda is the digestive system. Common ailments that many have come to regard as normal are considered the root of the disease process in the body. Gas, constipation, diarrhea, indigestion and bloating are all warning signs of impending problems.

The natures of the foods, spices and herbs we eat have the same qualities – hot/cold, wet/dry, heavy/light and mobile/stable – that define the doshas. Consequently, combinations of the foods we ingest will either benefit our individual constitutions or cause a reaction. For example, if you are predominantly pitta (hot, wet, light and mobile), eating spicy Mexican food, which has the same characteristics, might upset the digestion.

The solution is to eat the right foods at the right times. Of course, for most of us, this is probably not realistic. With the help of an Ayurvedic practitioner, one can identify which foods can combine to create a healthy diet.

One aspect of promoting a healthy digestive process is using the proper culinary spices in cooking, those which naturally aid in digestion and assimilation of food. Attached are two recipes, a tri-doshic (beneficial for all the doshas) ***Spice Blend*** and a beverage called ***Jal Jerra Lemonade***. As the warmer weather comes upon us, this lemonade made with cumin will be cooling as well as beneficial for digestion. While the spice blend is best assimilated when cooked into foods, it can also be sprinkled on cold food. If this recipe is too labor or time intensive, it can be purchased readymade on my website.